amar chitra katha

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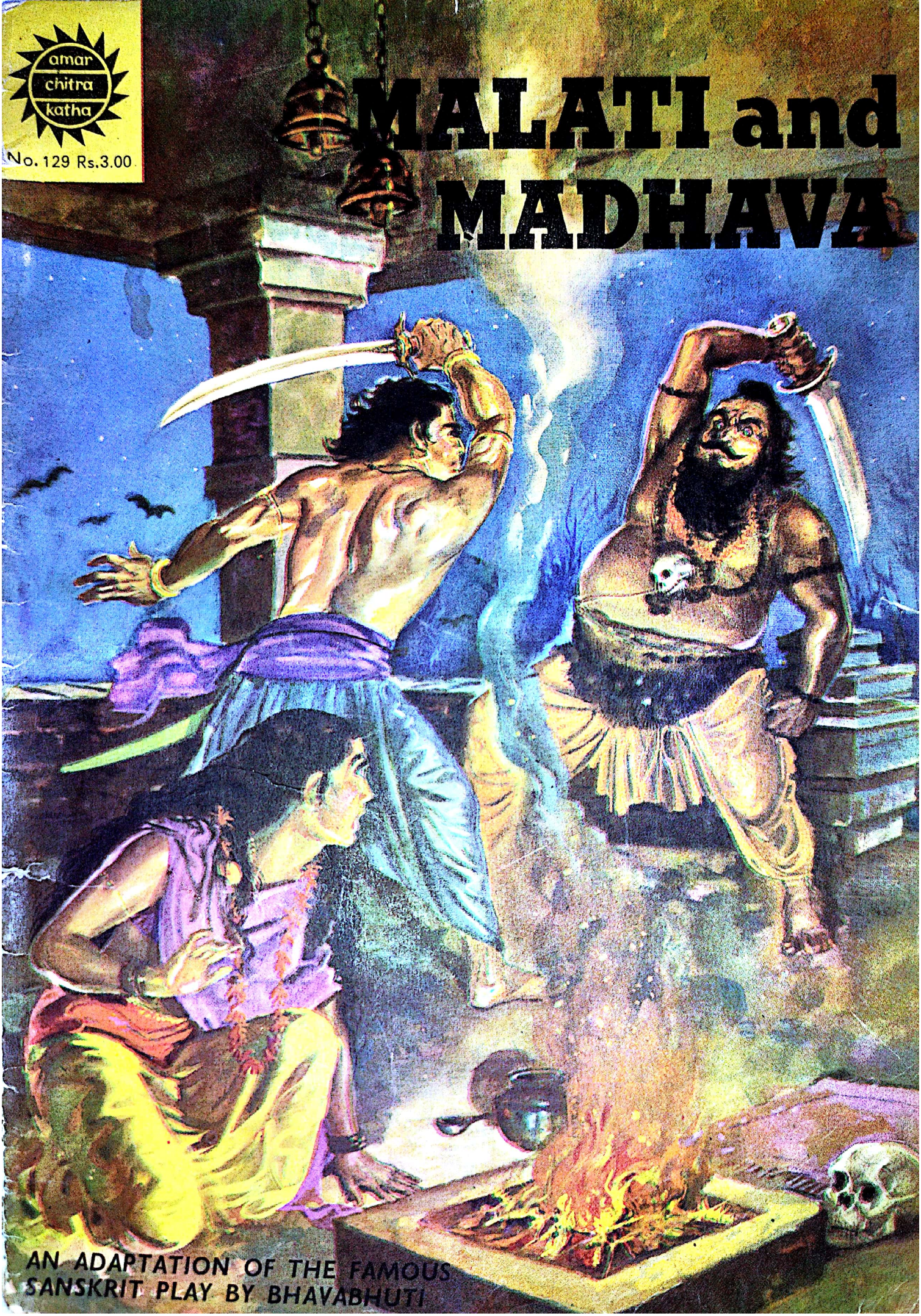
# MALATI and MADHAVA



AN ADAPTATION OF THE FAMOUS SANSKRIT PLAY BY BHAVABHUTI

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Bhavabhuti who is better known for his play *Uttara Rama Charita*, is also the author of *Malati-Madhava*, a Sanskrit play in ten acts, on which the present Amar Chitra Katha is based. The playwright lived in the first quarter of the eighth century in Padma Pura (somewhere in Eastern Maharashtra).

The author has freely drawn material for his play from the BRIHATKATHA of Gunandhya. He has so skilfully woven the material of a few select stories of the Brihatkatha into his plot of *Malati-Madhava* that the effect is very dramatic.

Macdonell refers to *Malati-Madhava* as a sort of *Romeo and Juliet* story with a happy ending. Malati and Madhava do not turn out to be another Romeo and Juliet, thanks to the nun Kamandaki who plays a more positive role than what Friar Laurence, her counterpart, in the Shakespearian tragedy, does. She is the mastermind who pulls strings and all others turn out to be mere puppets in her hands.

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**Editor:** Anant Pai

**Script:** Kamala Chandrakant **Illustrations:** Pratap Mulick

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# MALATI AND MADHAVA

LONG, LONG AGO, KAMANDAKI, A BUDDHIST NUN, RAN A SCHOOL AT PADMAVATI, IN CENTRAL INDIA. BOYS AND GIRLS FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY ATTENDED IT. ONE AMONG THEM WAS DEVARATA FROM KUNDINAPURA, A NEIGHBOURING KINGDOM.

AT SCHOOL, DEVARATA BECAME A CLOSE FRIEND OF BHURIVASU, OF PADMAVATI. WHEN THEIR STUDIES WERE OVER —

I WILL HAVE TO RETURN TO KUNDINAPURA. BUT WE SHALL REMAIN FAST FRIENDS, BHURIVASU.

CERTAINLY, DEVARATA. LET US SEAL IT WITH THE VOW WE'VE TALKED OF.



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THEY WENT TO KAMANDAKI AND TOOK THE VOW IN HER PRESENCE.

WHEN WE HAVE CHILDREN, IF ONE OF US HAS A BOY AND THE OTHER A GIRL, THEY SHALL MARRY.

SO BE IT. YOUR VOW SHALL BE FULFILLED AND SAUDAMINI HERE WILL HELP ME.

I PROMISE, I WILL, MOTHER.

SAUDAMINI WAS KAMANDAKI'S FAVOURITE PUPIL.

I HAVE DECIDED TO GO TO THE HILLS TO PERFECT MY YOGIC PRACTICES.

MAY YOU ACHIEVE PERFECTION.

WE TOO WISH YOU ALL SUCCESS.

YEARS PASSED. BHURIVASU, NOW A MINISTER IN THE COURT AT PADMAVATI, HAD A DAUGHTER, MALATI. KAMANDAKI OFTEN VISITED THEM. ONE DAY —

I WONDER IF DEVARATA REMEMBERS HIS PROMISE. HIS SON MADHAVA IS GROWN UP — A FINE YOUNG MAN.

YES. HE WOULD MAKE A GOOD HUSBAND FOR MALATI.

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A DISMAYED BHURIVASU THEN WENT TO KAMANDAKI AND TOLD HER ALL.

...AND THUS DID I BREAK MY WORD TO DEVARATA.

YOUR WORDS ARE CLEAR. THE KING'S DECISION BINDS HIS DAUGHTER; NOT MALATI.

LEAVE IT TO ME. I SHALL REDEEM YOUR WORD TO DEVARATA.

BUT DOES DEVARATA REMEMBER HIS PROMISE?

DEVARATA HAD NOT FORGOTTEN. THAT VERY DAY TWO YOUNG MEN CAME TO MOTHER KAMANDAKI'S MONASTERY.

WE ARE FROM KUNDINAPURA. I AM MADHAVA, SON OF DEVARATA AND THIS IS MY COMPANION, MAKARANDA.

MADHAVA HAS ARRIVED AT THE RIGHT TIME.

WE HAVE BEEN SENT TO YOU TO STUDY LOGIC, MOTHER.

DEVARATA MUST HAVE SENT HIM HERE TO WOO AND WIN MALATI.



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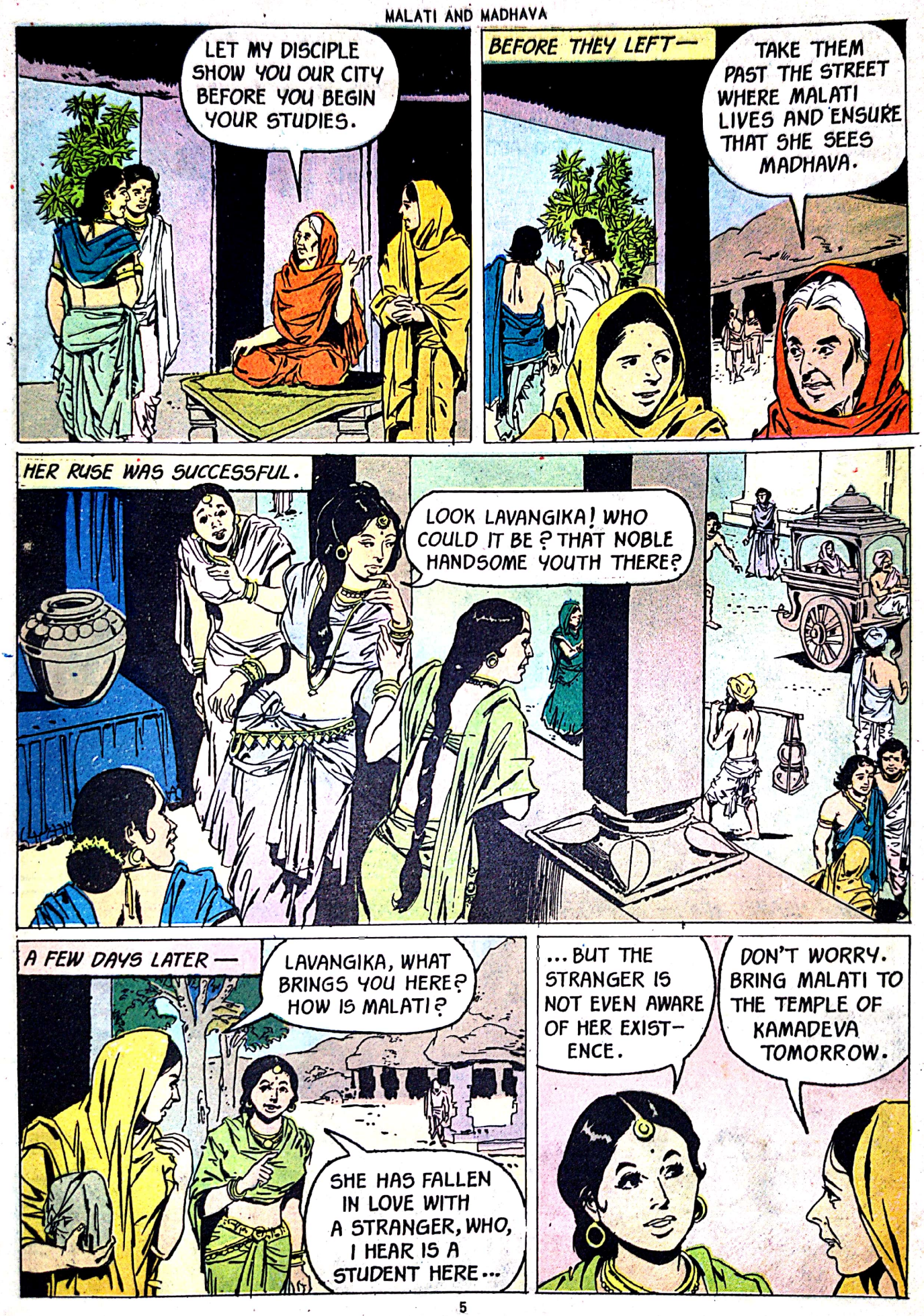




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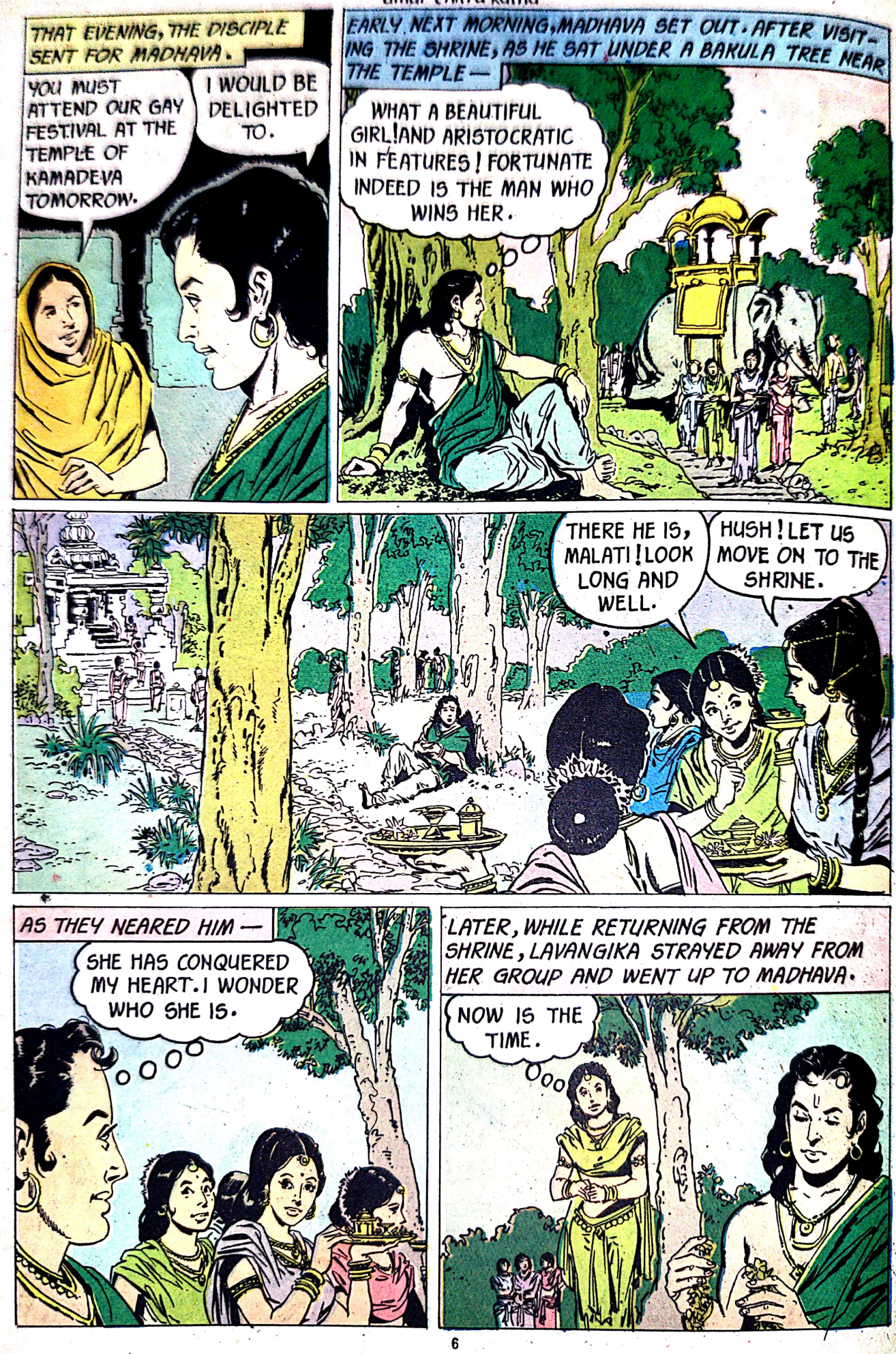




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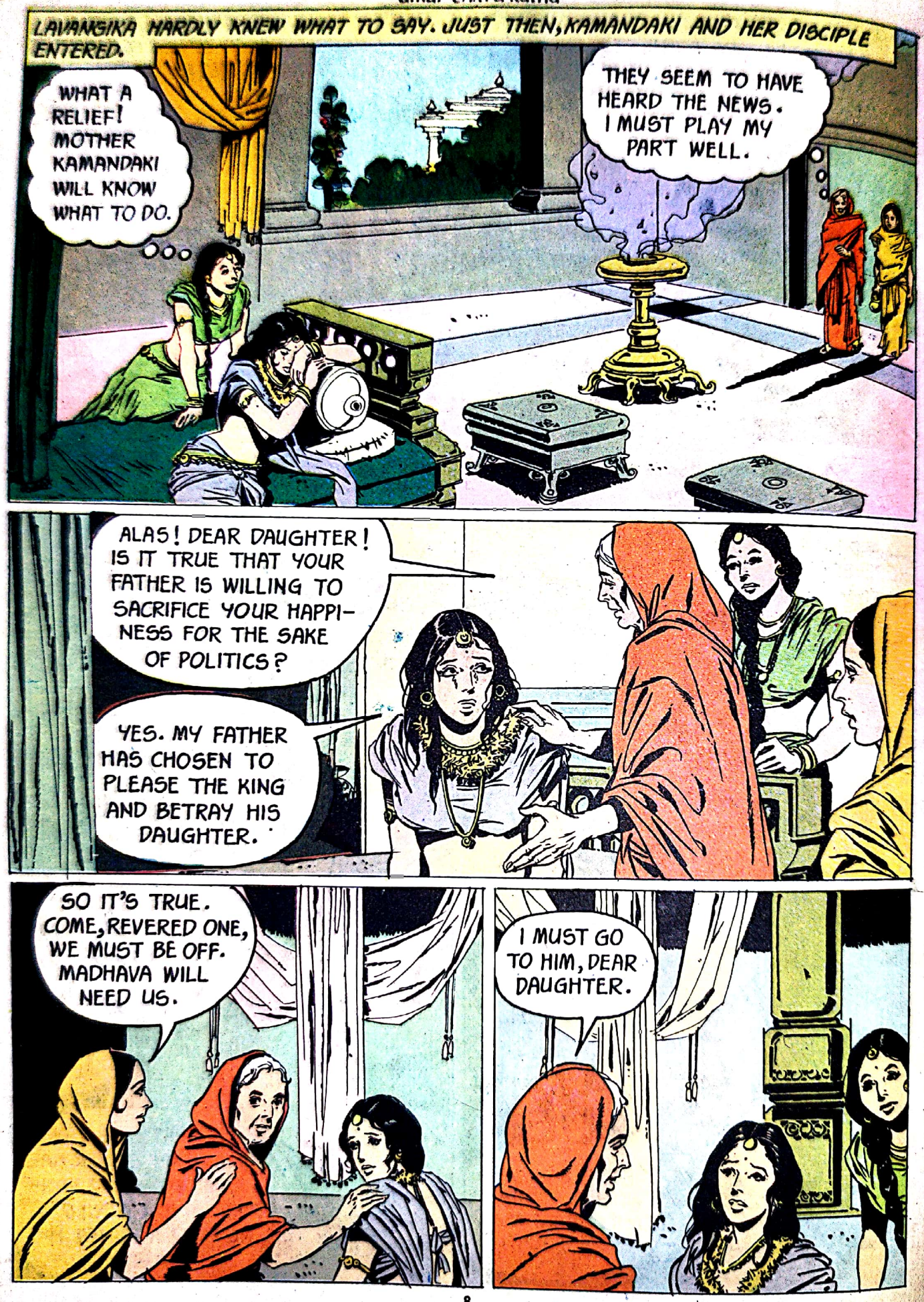
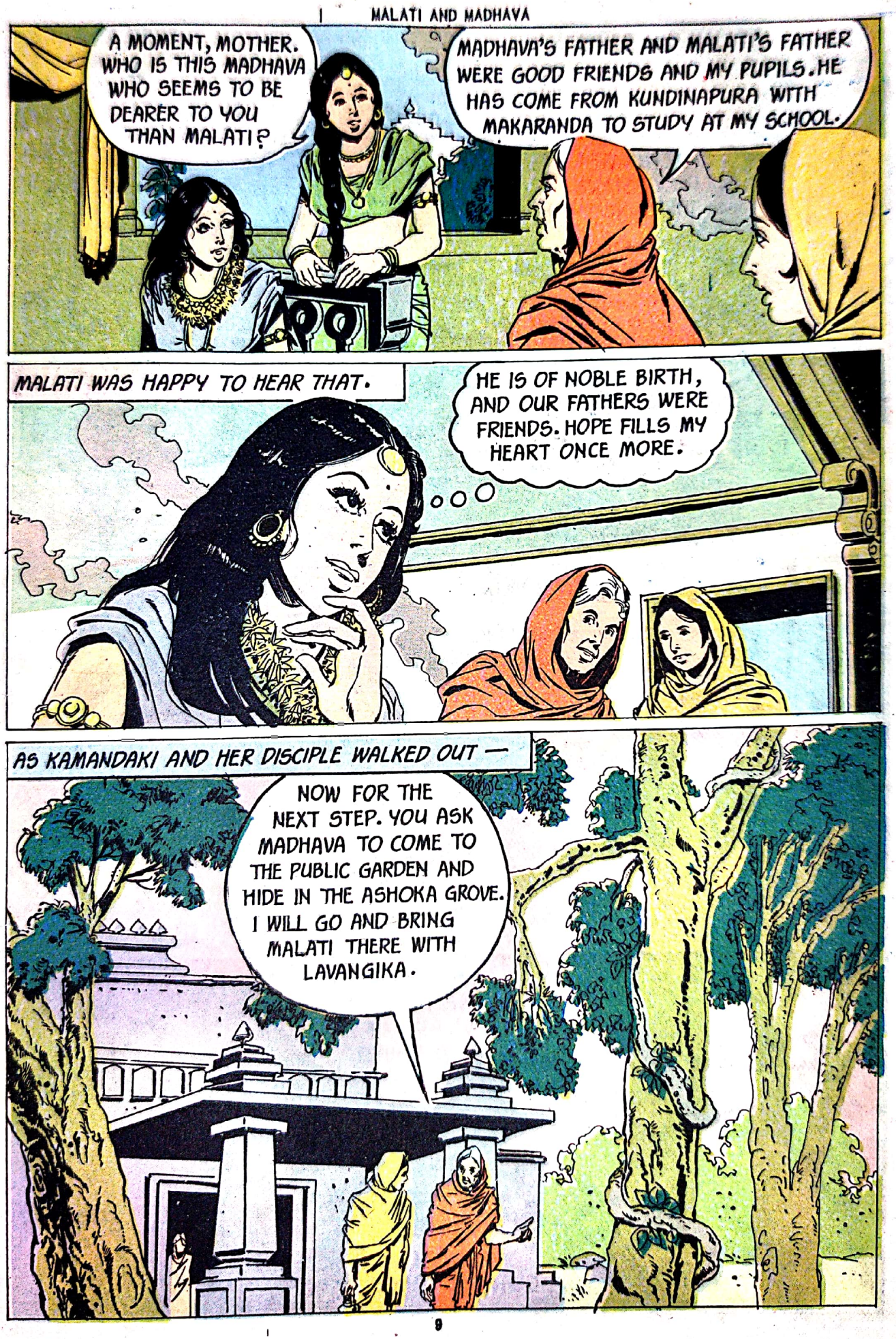

LAVANGIKA HARDLY KNEW WHAT TO SAY. JUST THEN, KAMANDAKI AND HER DISCIPLE ENTERED.
WHAT A RELIEF! MOTHER KAMANDAKI WILL KNOW WHAT TO DO.
THEY SEEM TO HAVE HEARD THE NEWS. I MUST PLAY MY PART WELL.
ALAS! DEAR DAUGHTER! IS IT TRUE THAT YOUR FATHER IS WILLING TO SACRIFICE YOUR HAPPINESS FOR THE SAKE OF POLITICS?
YES. MY FATHER HAS CHOSEN TO PLEASE THE KING AND BETRAY HIS DAUGHTER.
SO IT'S TRUE. COME, REVERED ONE, WE MUST BE OFF. MADHAVA WILL NEED US.
I MUST GO TO HIM, DEAR DAUGHTER.


A MOMENT, MOTHER. WHO IS THIS MADHAVA WHO SEEMS TO BE DEARER TO YOU THAN MALATI?
MADHAVA'S FATHER AND MALATI'S FATHER WERE GOOD FRIENDS AND MY PUPILS. HE HAS COME FROM KUNDINAPURA WITH MAKARANDA TO STUDY AT MY SCHOOL.
MALATI WAS HAPPY TO HEAR THAT.
HE IS OF NOBLE BIRTH, AND OUR FATHERS WERE FRIENDS. HOPE FILLS MY HEART ONCE MORE.
AS KAMANDAKI AND HER DISCIPLE WALKED OUT —
NOW FOR THE NEXT STEP. YOU ASK MADHAVA TO COME TO THE PUBLIC GARDEN AND HIDE IN THE ASHOKA GROVE. I WILL GO AND BRING MALATI THERE WITH LAVANGIKA.

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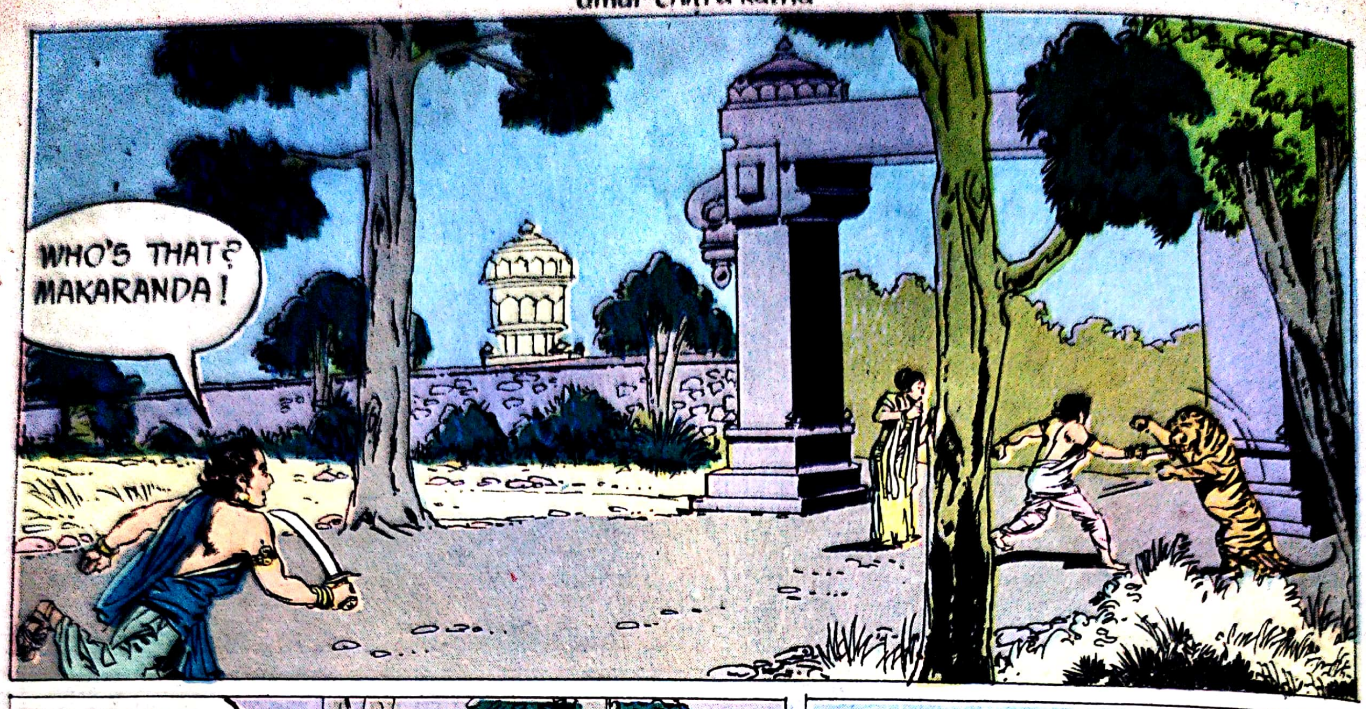

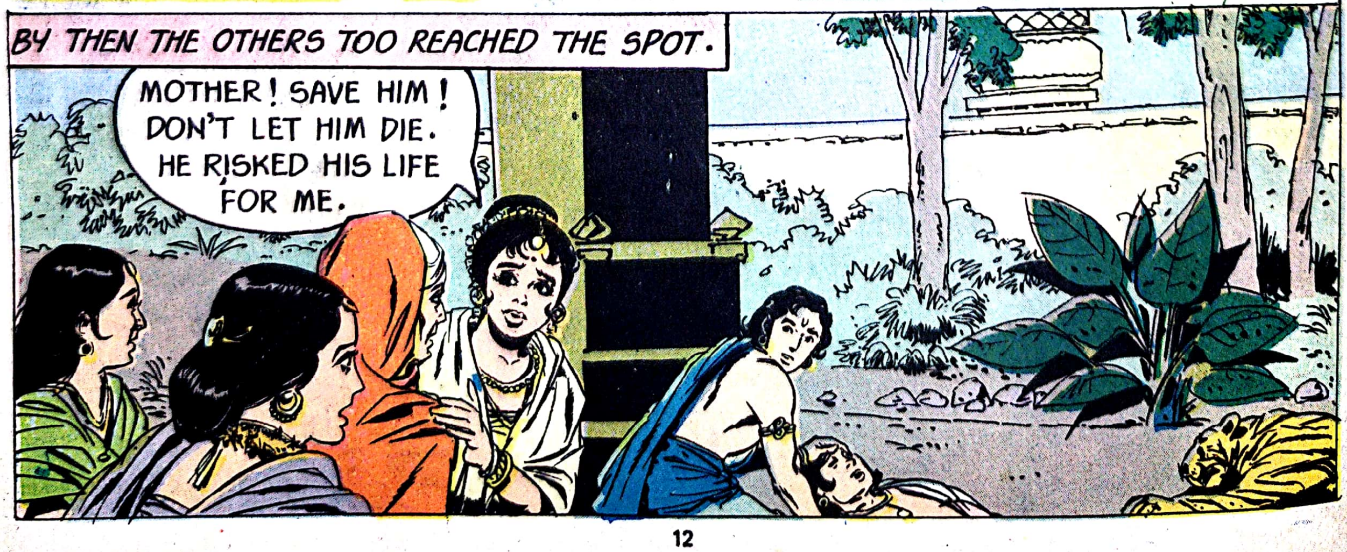




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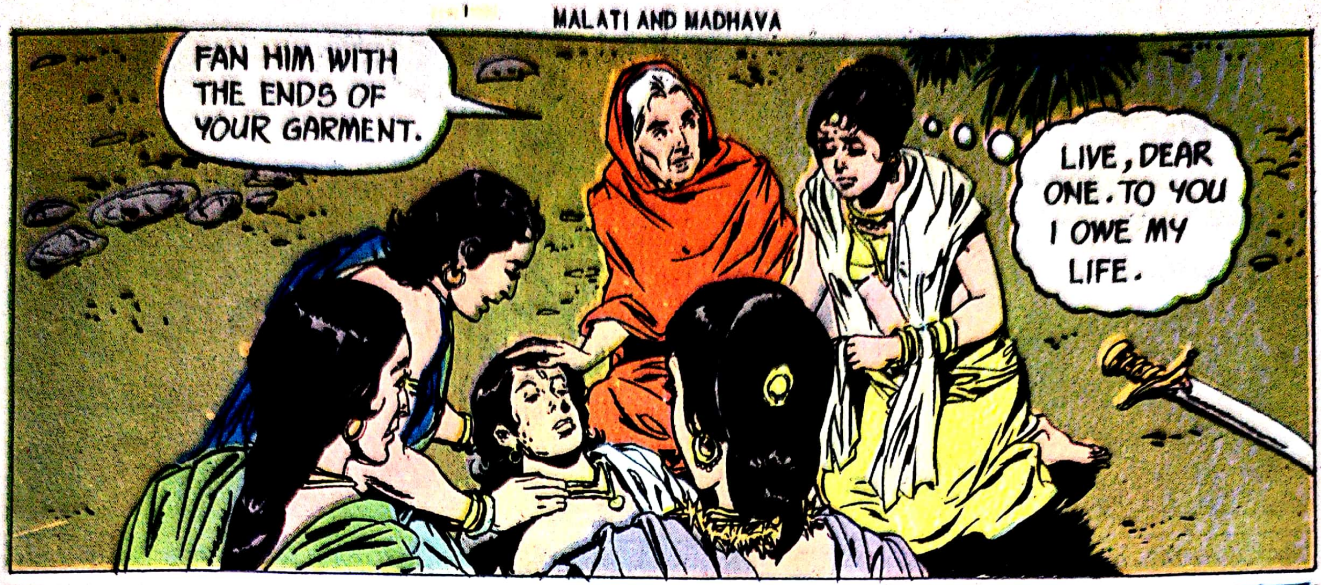


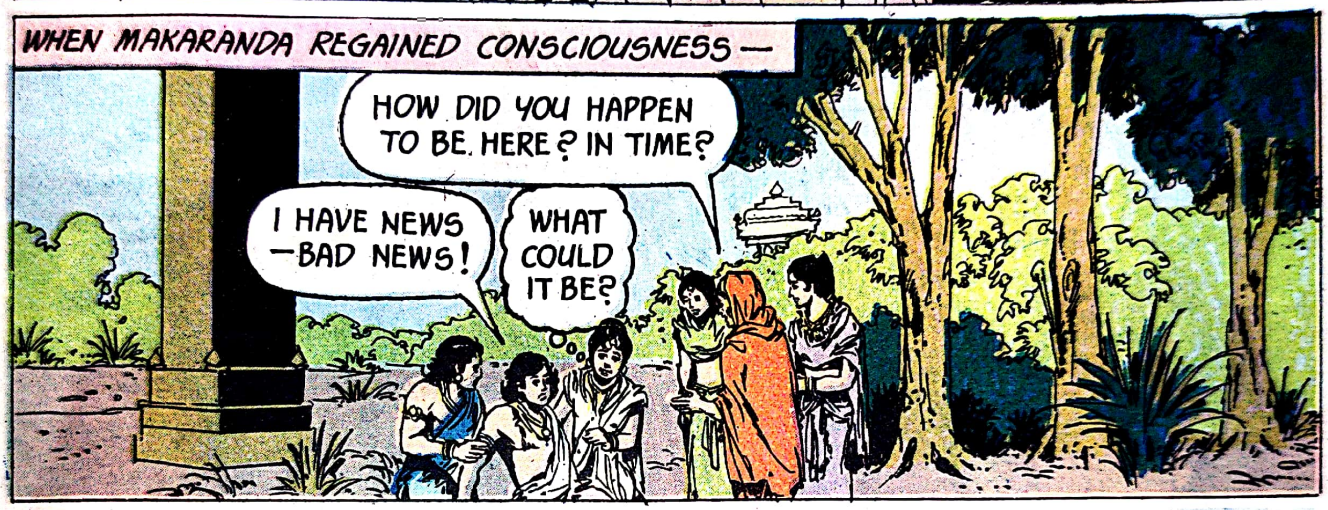


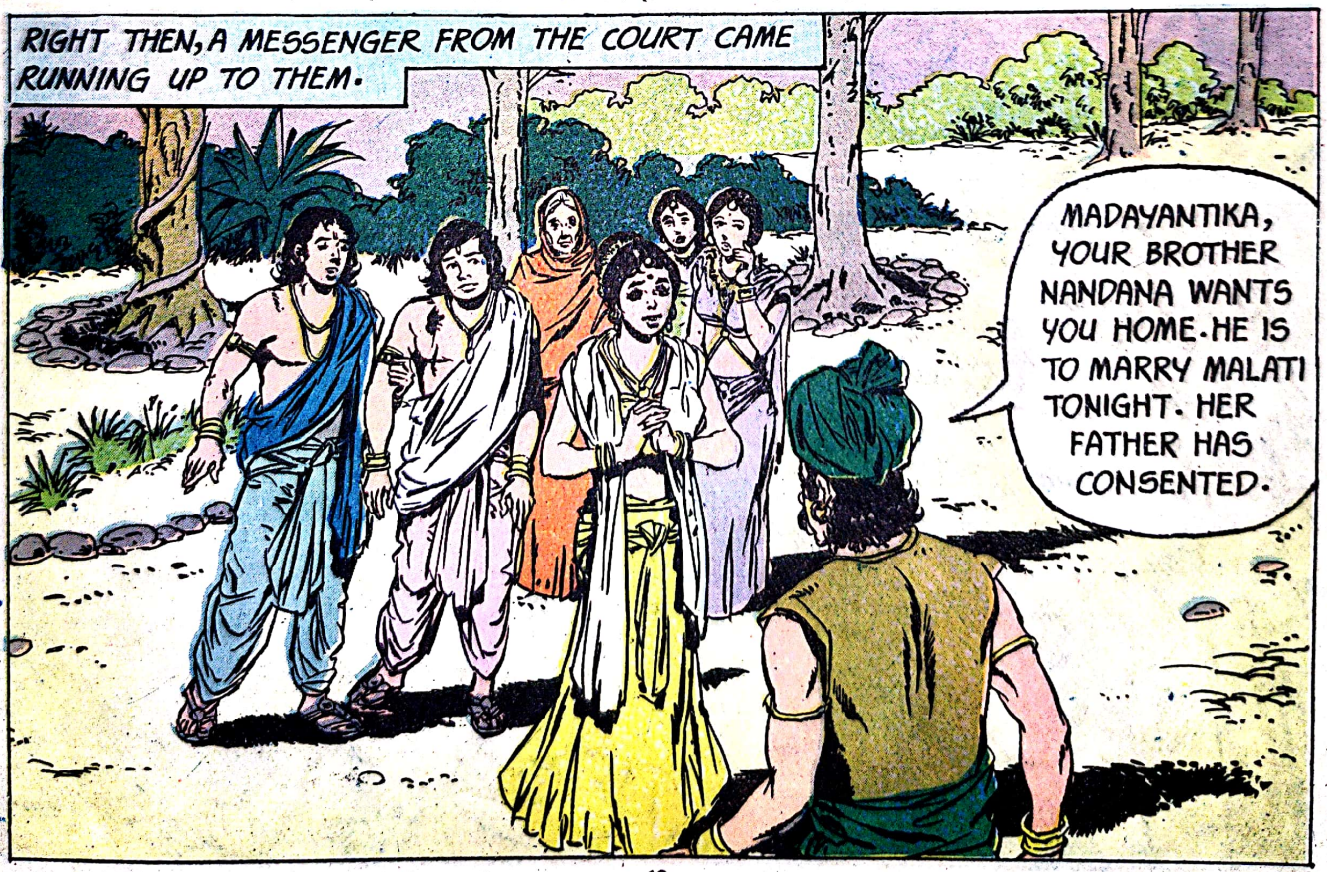




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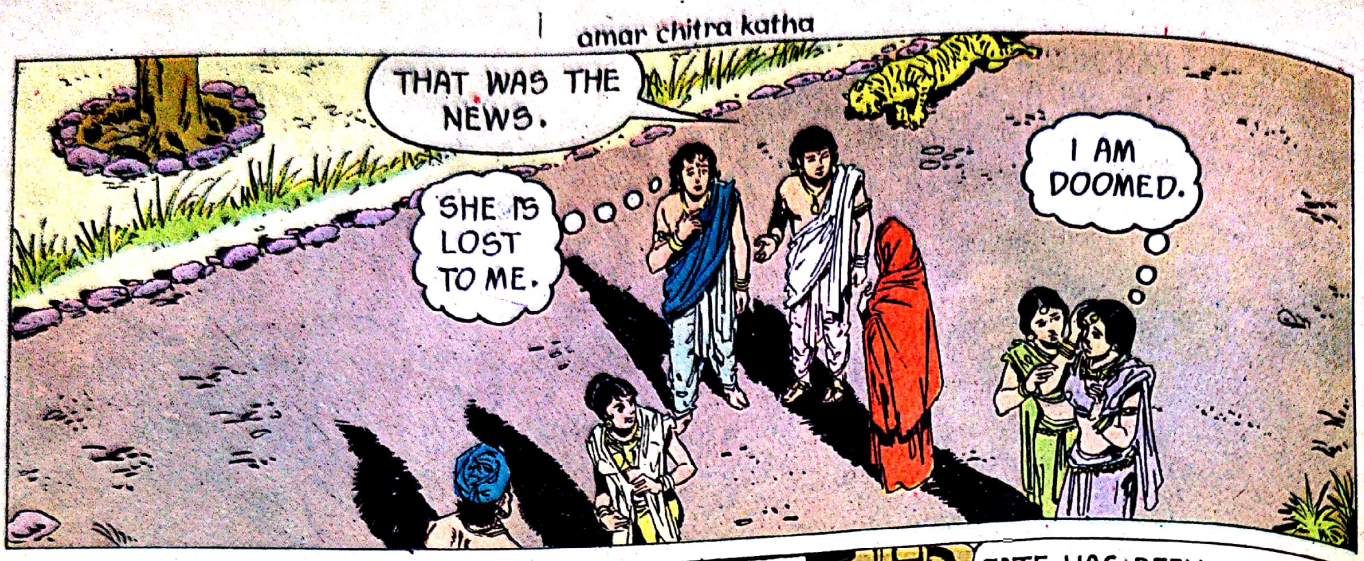
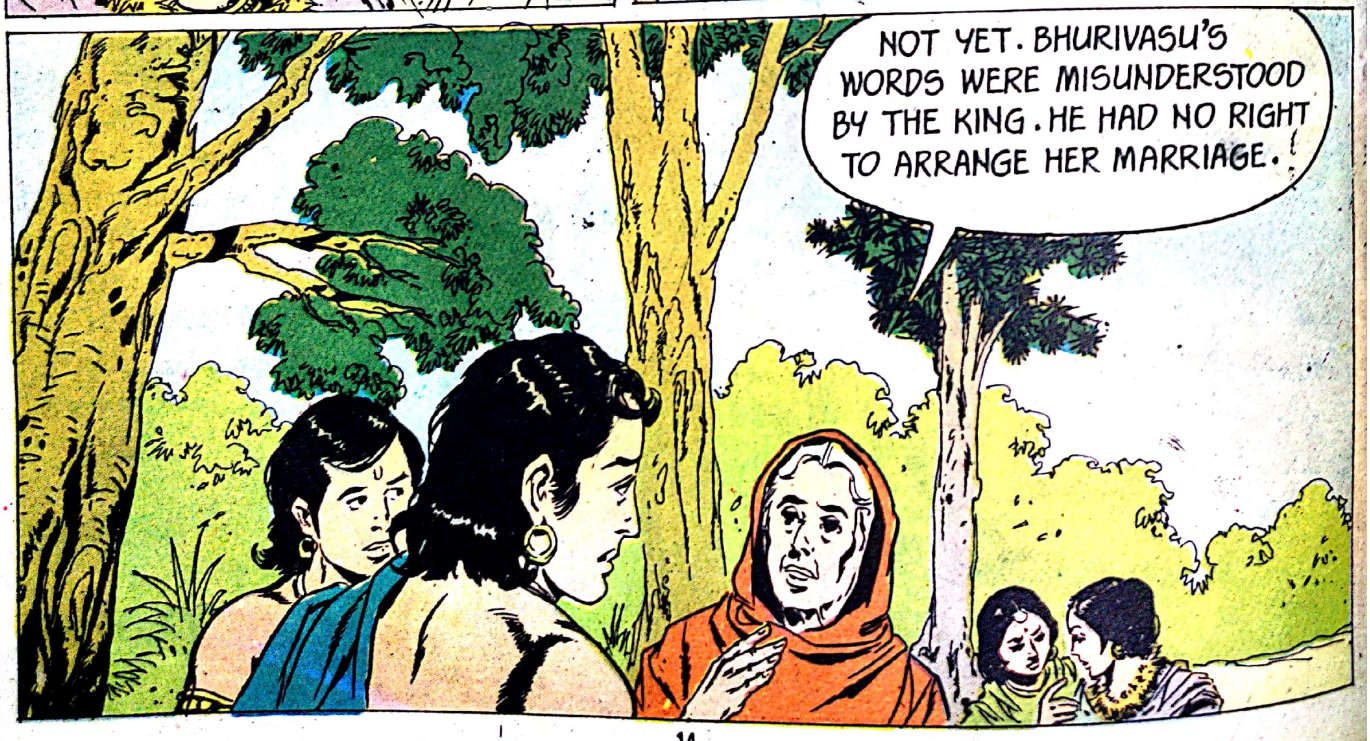



MADAYANTIKA HARDLY NOTICED THE EFFECT THE NEWS HAD ON MALATI AND MADHAVA. SHE RAN TOWARDS MALATI —



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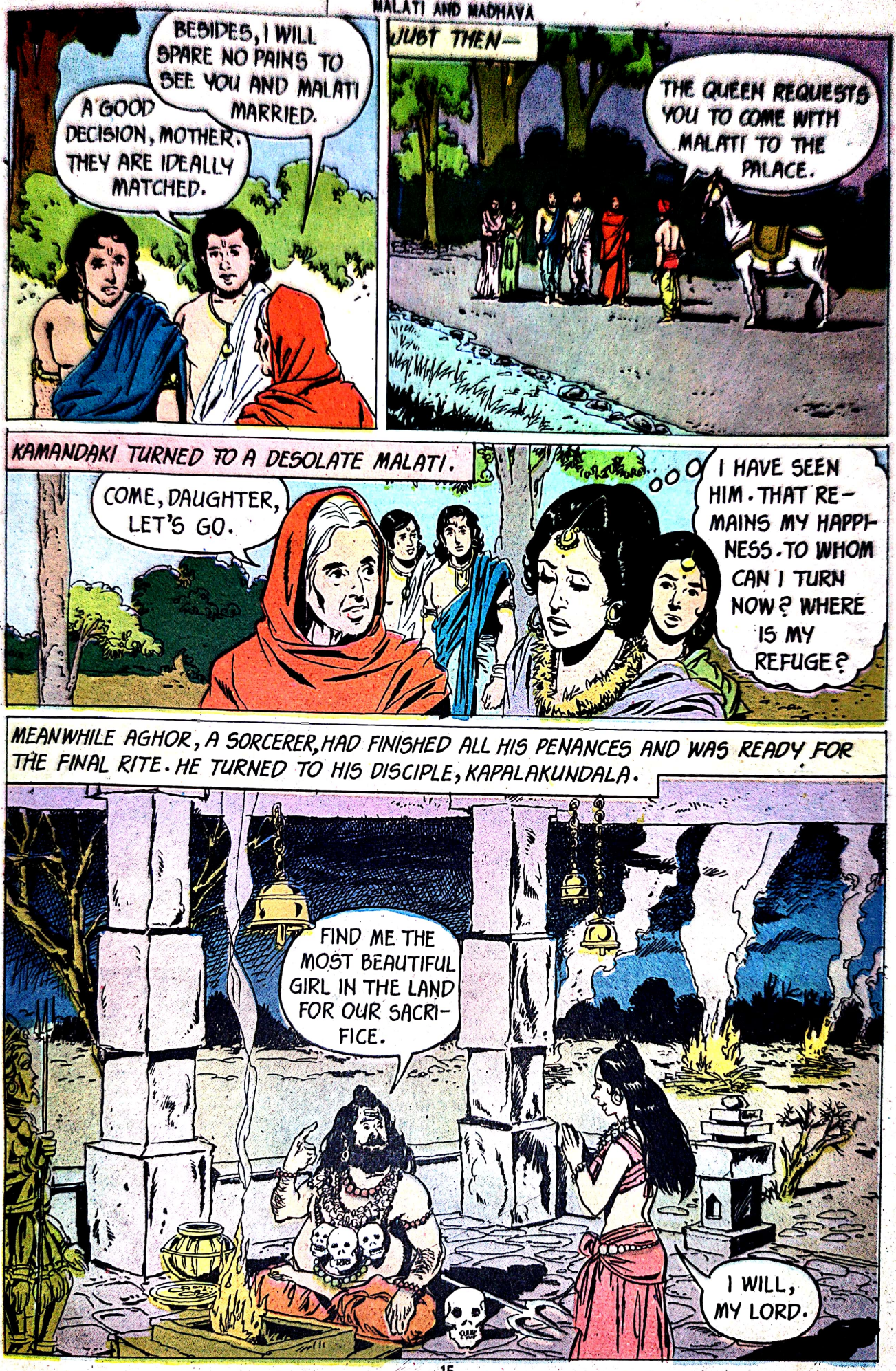




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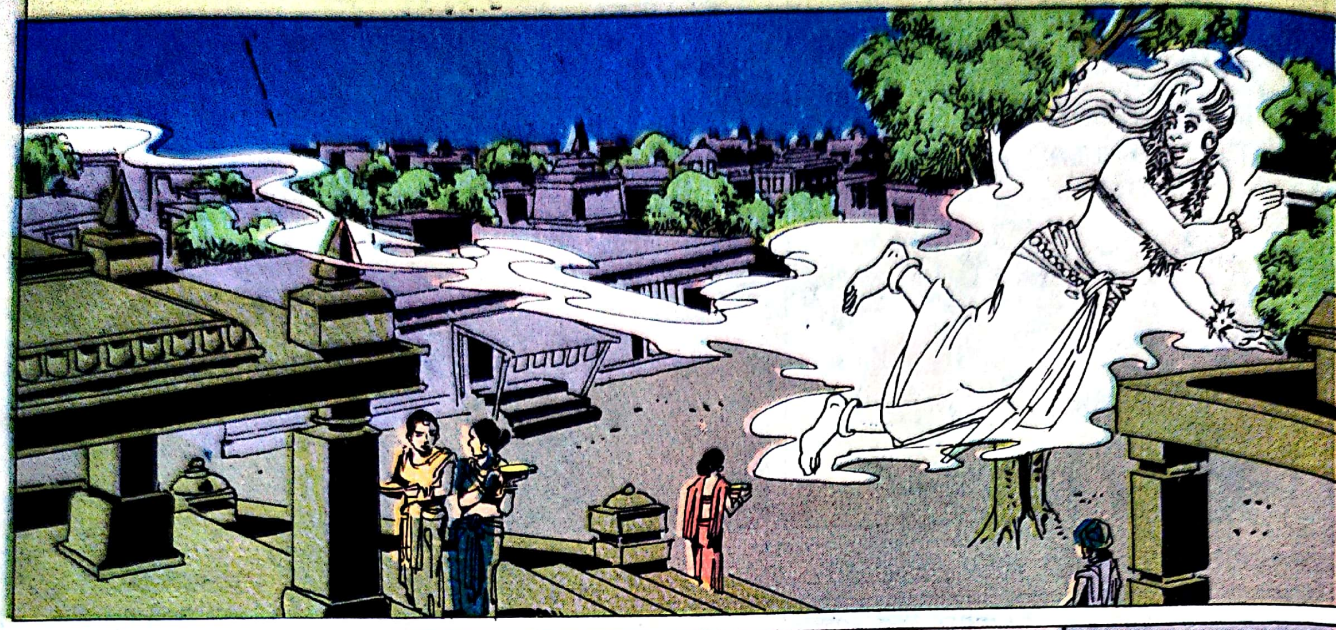
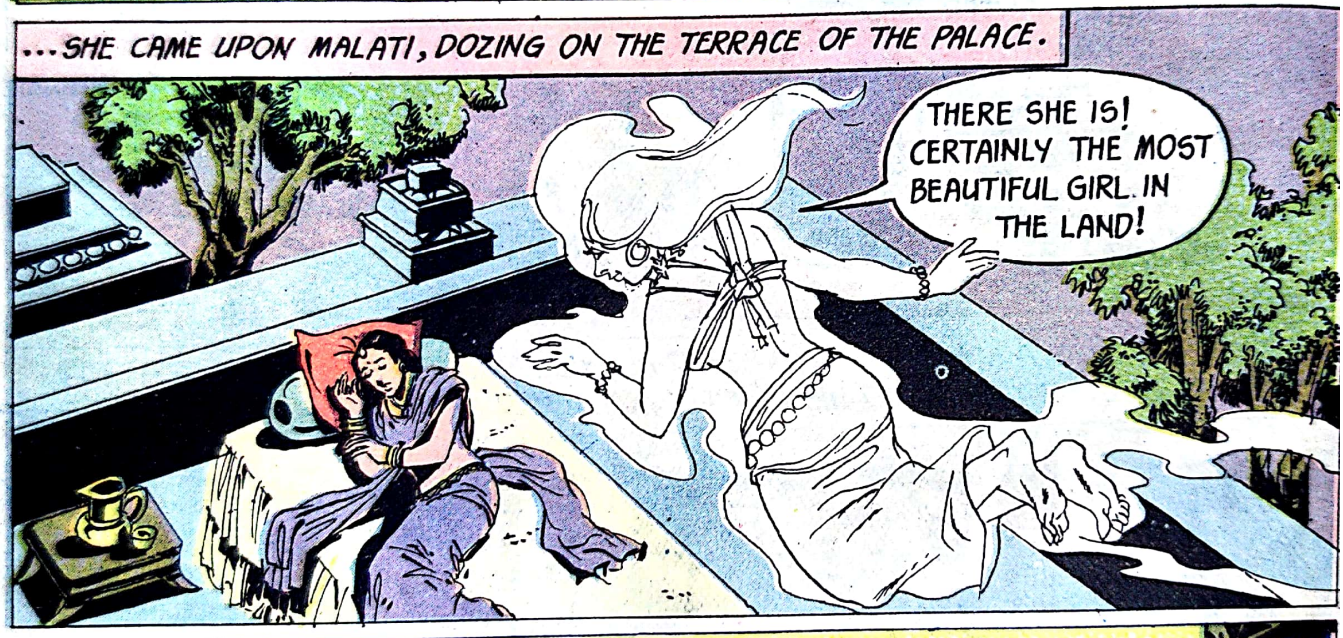
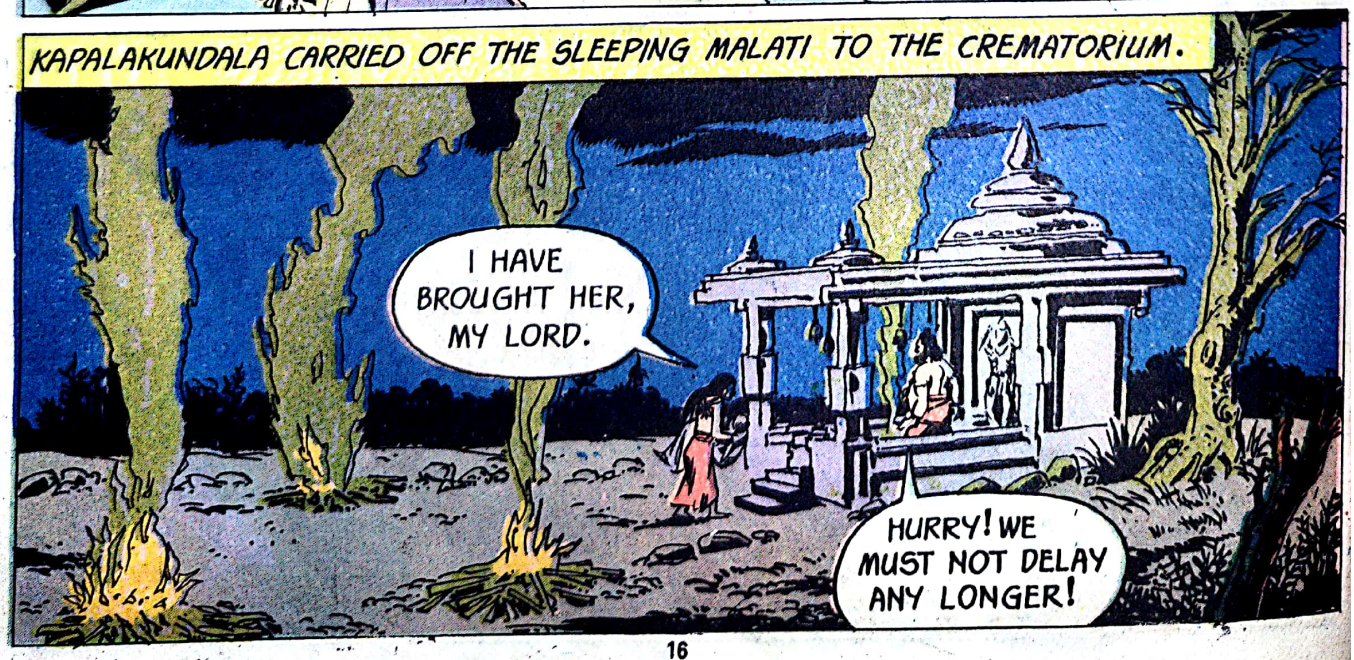
AS KAPALAKUNDALA, MAKING HERSELF INVISIBLE, WANDERED IN SEARCH OF A MAIDEN...



...SHE CAME UPON MALATI, DOZING ON THE TERRACE OF THE PALACE.




KAPALAKUNDALA CARRIED OFF THE SLEEPING MALATI TO THE CREMATORIUM.



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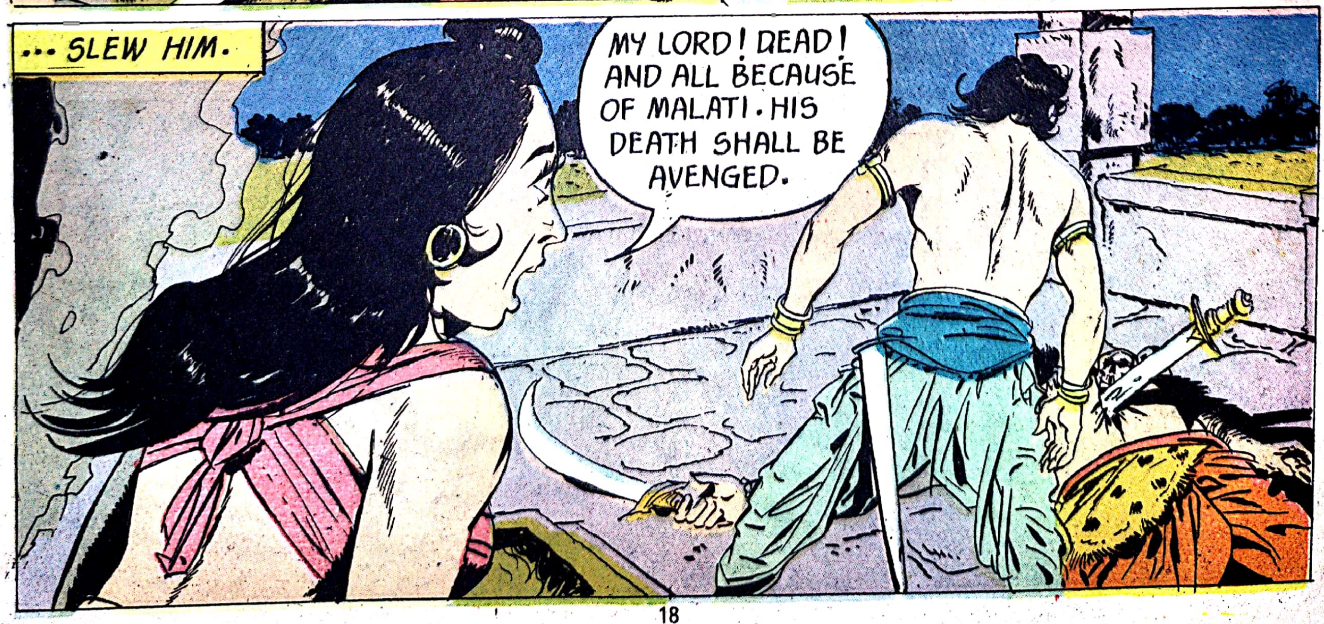
A DAZED MALATI DID NOT PROTEST.
CRUEL FATHER, YOU WOULD SACRIFICE ME TO GAIN THE KING'S FAVOUR. BUT THESE EVIL ONES HAVE FORESTALLED YOU.
THAT VOICE! IT'S MALATI'S. BU-BUT, WHAT IS SHE DOING HERE?
DIVINE GODDESS, ACCEPT THIS HUMBLE OFFERING...
DESIST, VILE WRETCH.



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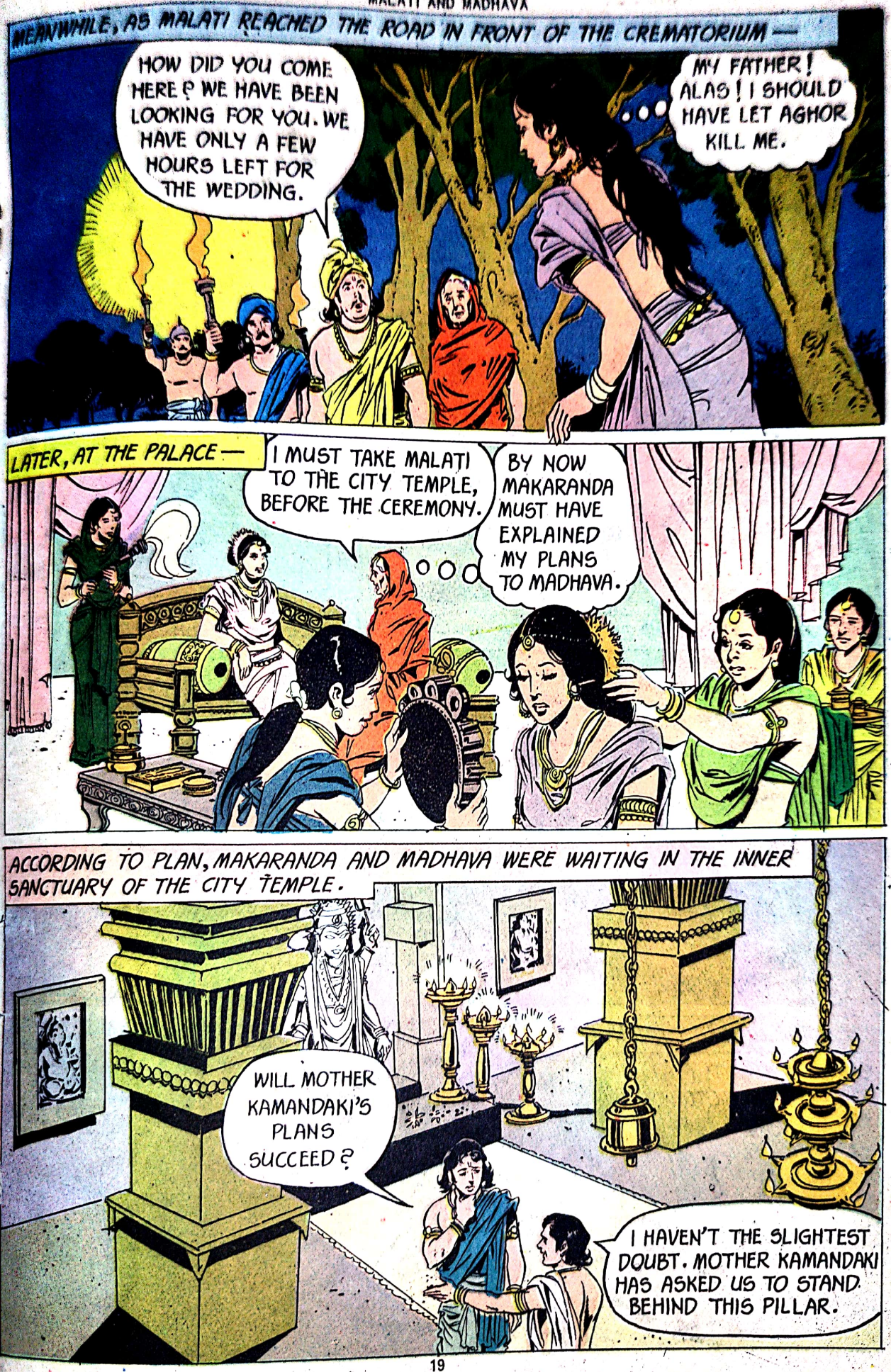




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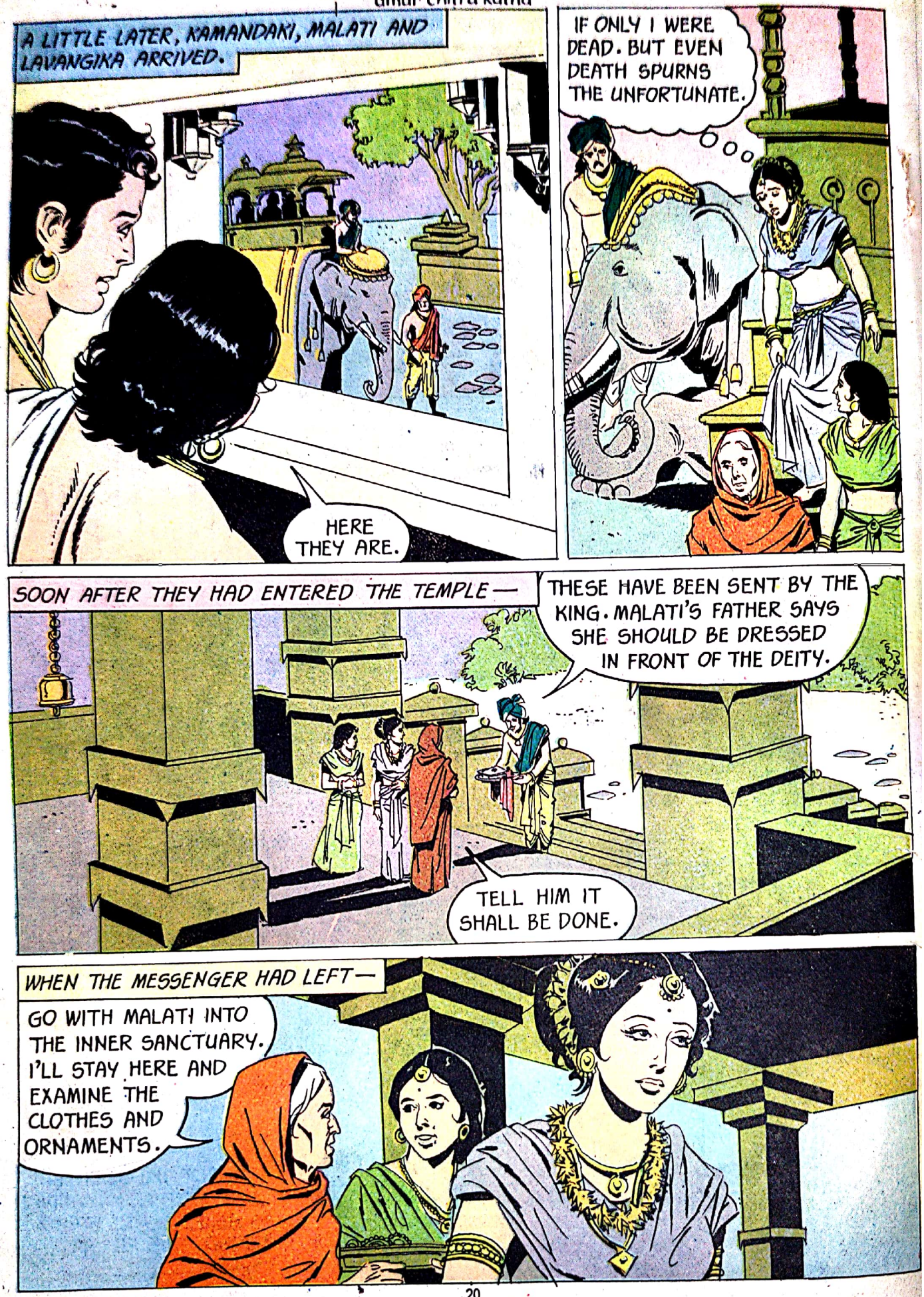




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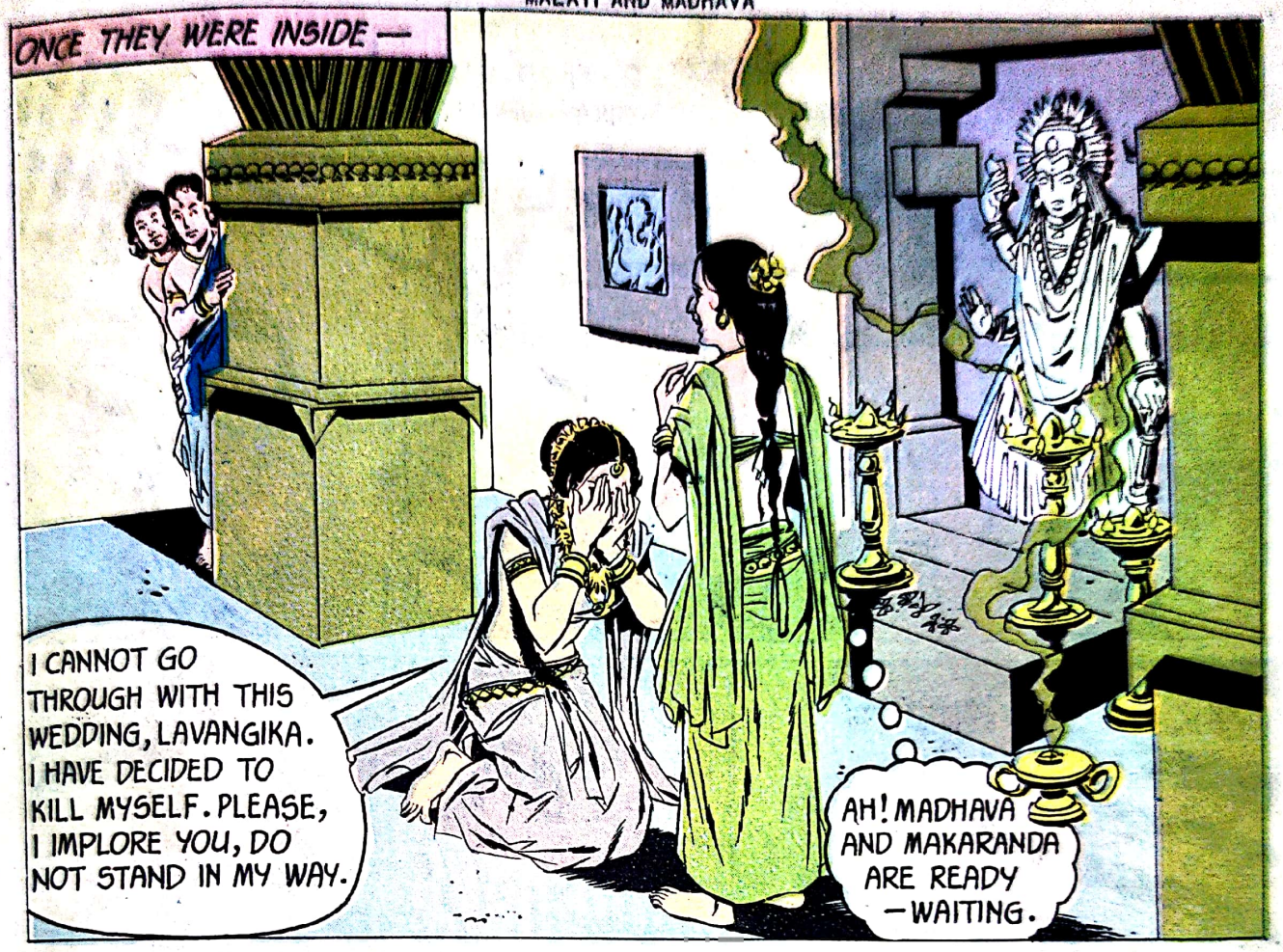

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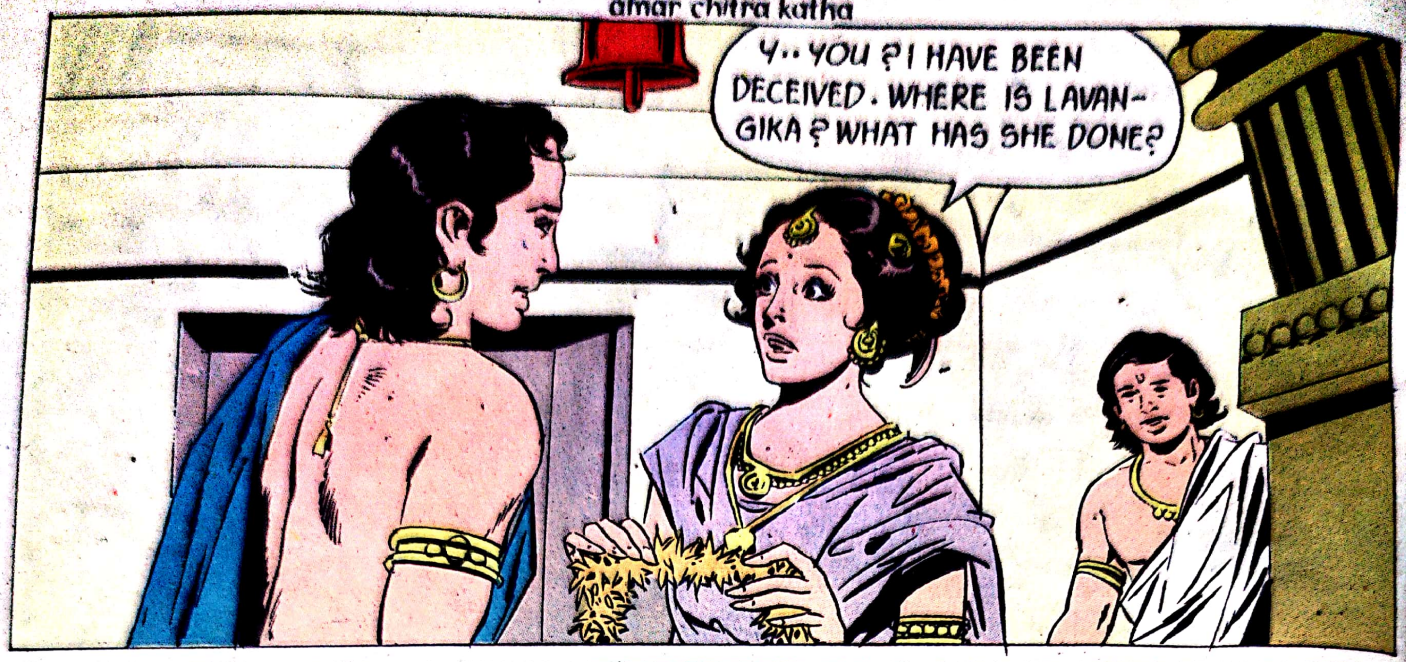


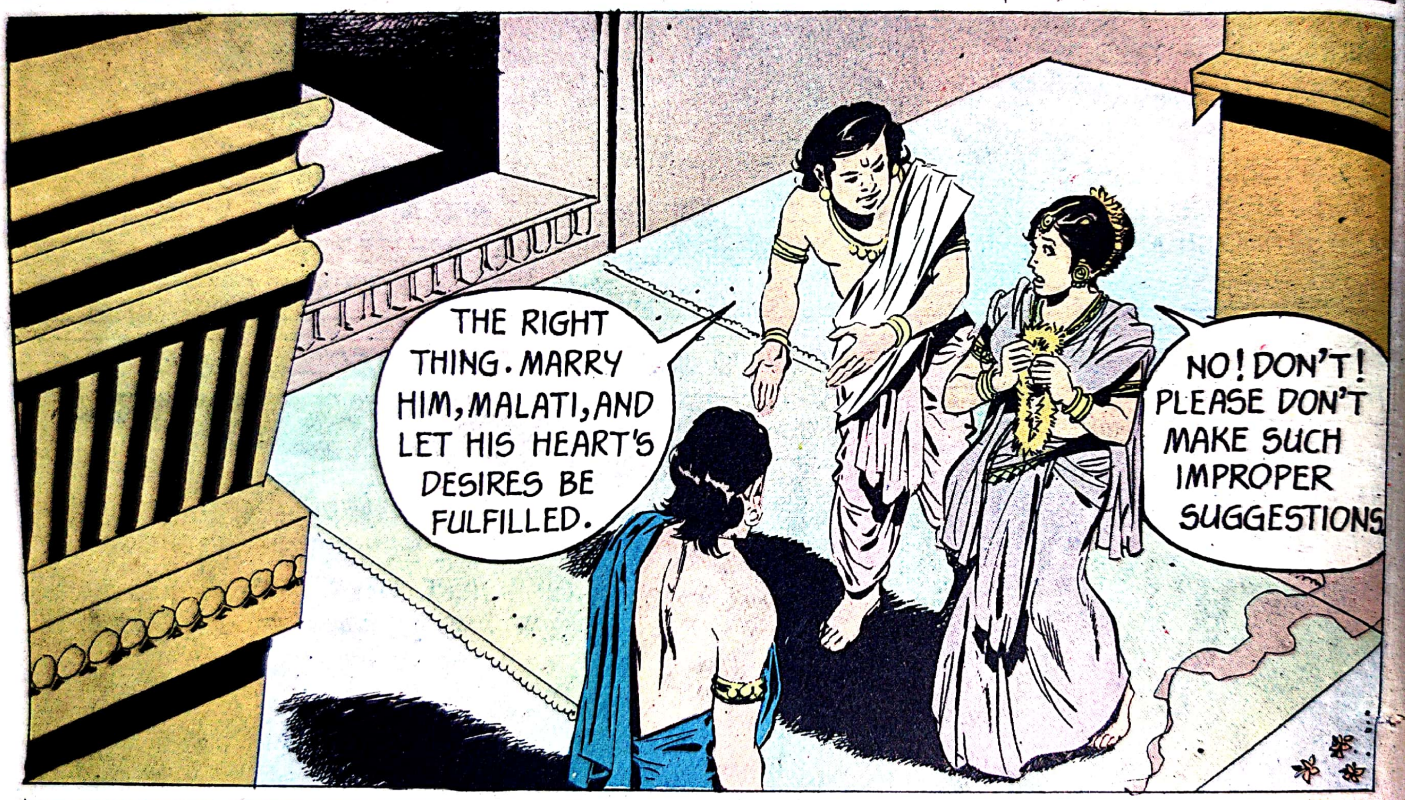


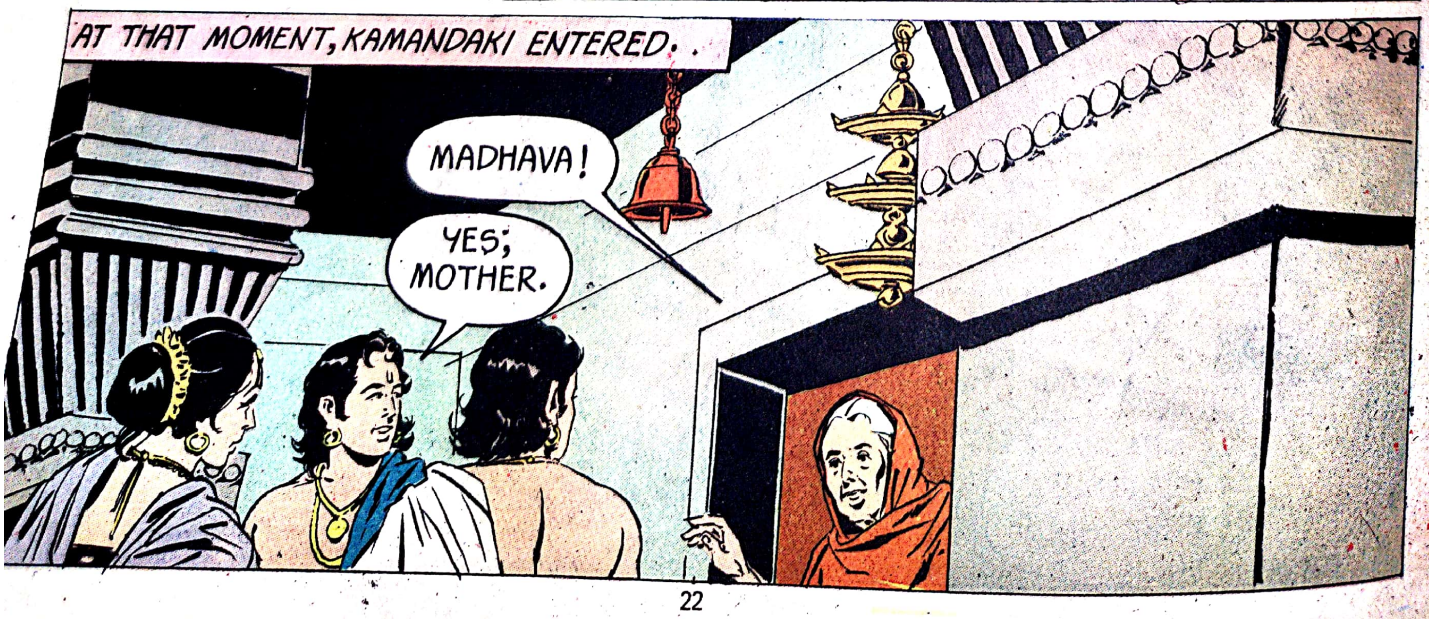




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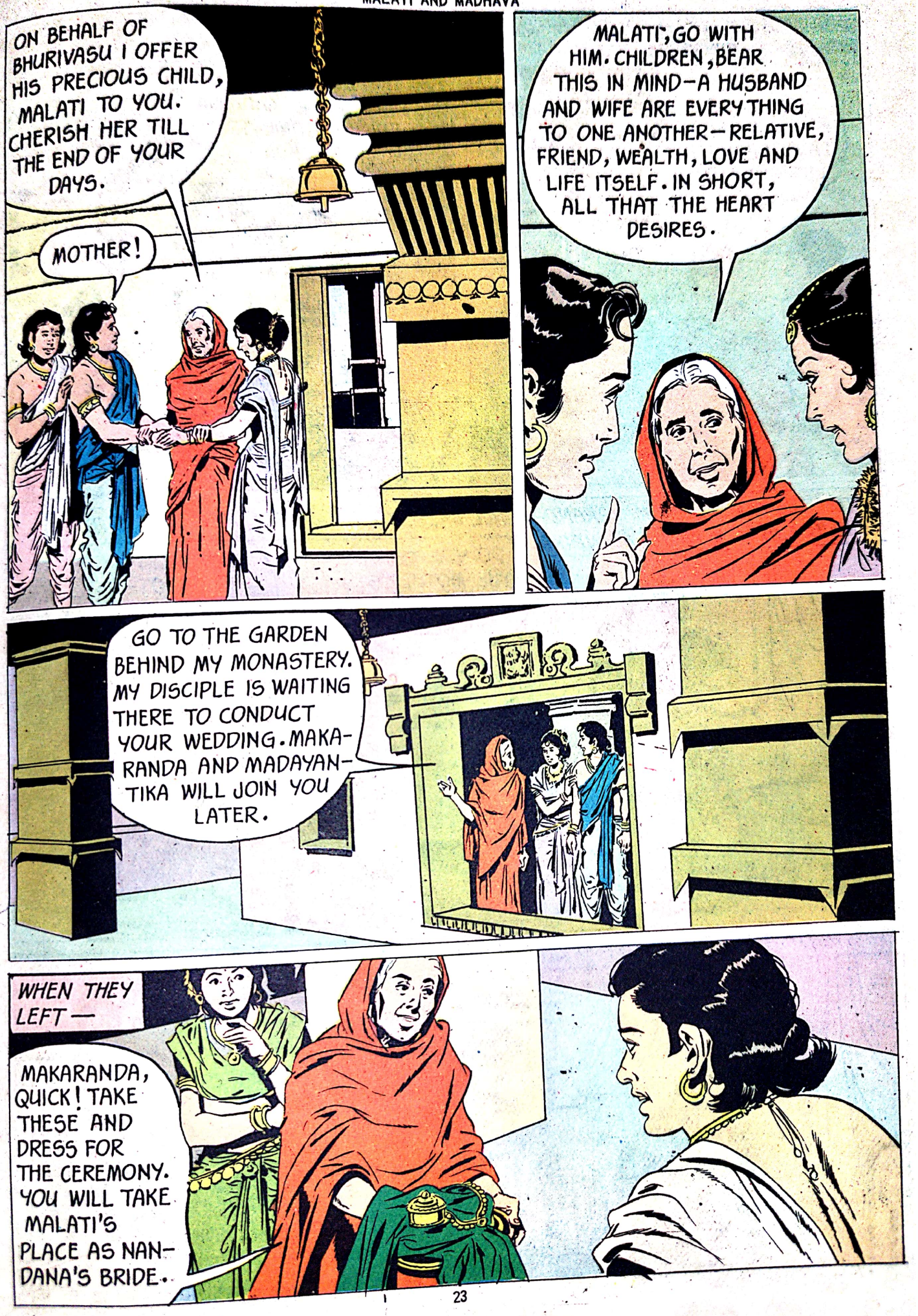




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AS SOON AS MAKARANDA APPEARED, DRESSED IN THE BRIDAL ROBES—

HE'S READY. COME, LAVANGIKA, LET'S GO.

AND NANDANA WAS MARRIED TO MAKARANDA WHOM HE BELIEVED TO BE MALATI.

THIS SHOULD GIVE MALATI AND MADHAVA ENOUGH TIME TO ESCAPE.

AFTER THE CEREMONY, MAKARANDA, STILL DRESSED AS MALATI, RETIRED TO THE BRIDE'S CHAMBER WITH LAVANGIKA.

DO YOU THINK THE MOTHER'S PLANS WILL SUCCEED?

THEY WILL. I HEAR FOOTSTEPS. COVER YOUR FACE.

MADAYANTIKA WHO WAS NOT IN ON THE SECRET, ENTERED THE ROOM.

HOW IS MALATI? I HEAR SHE HAS BEEN MOODY AND IRRITABLE. SO SAYS MY BROTHER.

NEVER MIND MALATI. SHE'S A BRIDE AND IT'S NATURAL. HOW ABOUT YOU?



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MADAYANTIKA REALISED THAT IT WAS NO USE HIDING HER SECRET FROM LAVANGIKA.

EVER SINCE THE DAY MAKARANDA RISKED HIS LIFE TO SAVE MINE, I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO FORGET HIM.

MALATI, ARE YOU... W-WHO'S THIS? H--HOW...

DEAR MADAYANTIKA, IT IS I, YOUR MAKARANDA.

LAVANGIKA, PRACTICAL AS USUAL, DID NOT WANT TO WASTE TIME IN EXPLANATIONS.

COME, LET US ESCAPE BEFORE DAYBREAK.

WHERE?

MALATI AND MADHAVA ARE WAITING FOR US.

A PUZZLED MADAYANTIKA GAVE UP TRYING TO UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS GOING ON.



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MEANWHILE, THE KING HEARD ABOUT THE TRICK PLAYED ON NANDANA AND SENT THE CITY GUARDS OUT AFTER MAKARANDA.

THE CITY GUARDS! RUN, BOTH OF YOU. RUN TO MADHAVA. DON'T WAIT FOR ME.

LAVANGIKA AND MADAYANTIKA RAN WITHOUT LOOKING BACK, TO THE GARDEN BEHIND THE MONASTERY.

HELP! MADHAVA... THE CITY GUARDS... RUN TO MAKARANDA'S AID. I'LL GO TO MOTHER KAMANDAKI. MALATI AND MADAYANTIKA CAN WAIT HERE FOR ME.

MALATI AND MADAYANTIKA ANXIOUSLY WAITED FOR LAVANGIKA TO RETURN. WHEN THERE WAS NO SIGN OF HER —

YOU WAIT HERE, MADAYANTIKA. I'LL WALK DOWN THE ROAD AND MEET LAVANGIKA AS SHE RETURNS.

AS MALATI WALKED DOWN THE ROAD, KAPALAKUNDALA SUDDENLY POUNCED ON HER.

HA! WRETCH! WAIT! YOU BROUGHT DEATH TO MY GURU. YOU TOO SHALL DIE.

LORD! LORD!

KAPALAKUNDALA TOOK MALATI TO THE CREMATORIUM AND JUST THEN SAUDAMINI, WHO HAD COME TO PADMAVATI ON A VISIT, PASSED BY. SHE HEARD MALATI'S CRIES.

LORD! SAVE ME...

JUST AS KAPALAKUNDALA'S SWORD WAS ABOUT TO FALL ON MALATI, SAUDAMINI LIFTED HER INTO THE SKY...

...AND DISAPPEARED.

MEANWHILE, MADAYANTIKA, HAVING NOTHING TO DO, DECIDED TO FOLLOW MALATI; BUT IT WAS LAVANGIKA WHO MET HER.

THE KING HEARD ABOUT THE TRICK PLAYED ON YOUR BROTHER AND OF YOUR DISAPPEARANCE. IT WAS HE WHO SENT THE GUARDS AFTER MAKARANDA.



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"BUT AS HE STOOD ON THE TURRETS OF HIS PALACE, LOOKING ON AT THE FRAY, MADHAVA AND MAKARANDA ACQUITTED THEMSELVES SO WELL THAT HE WAS PLEASED."

HOW VALIANTLY THEY FIGHT. IT IS SMALL WONDER THAT MALATI AND MADAYANTIKA HAVE CHOSEN THEM.

BUT WHERE IS MALATI?

I THOUGHT **YOU** WOULD KNOW.

JUST THEN MADHAVA AND MAKARANDA REACHED THERE.

OH! THANK GOD IT'S YOU.

WHERE IS MALATI? WE HAVE GOOD NEWS. THE KING HAS FORGIVEN US.



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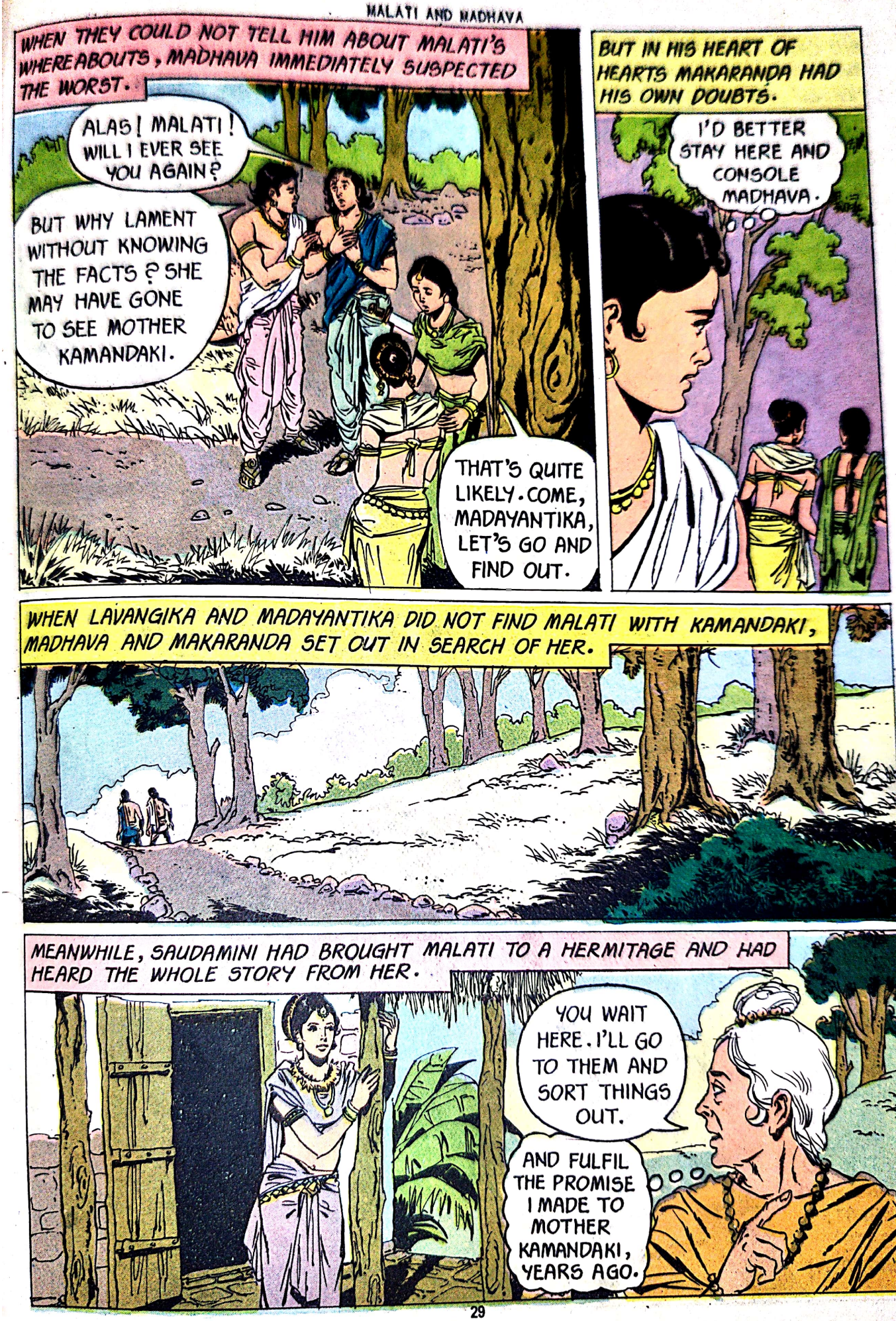




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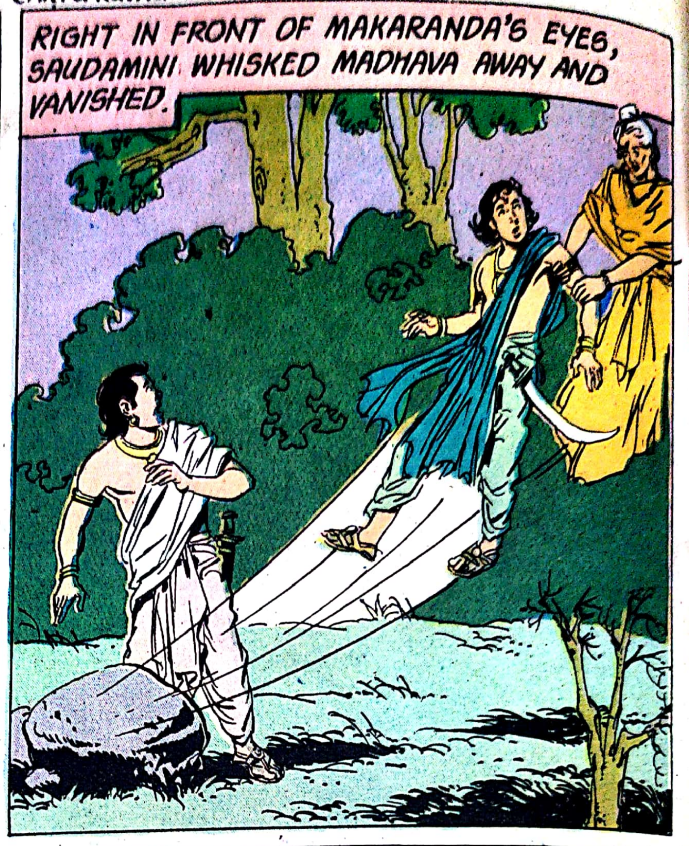
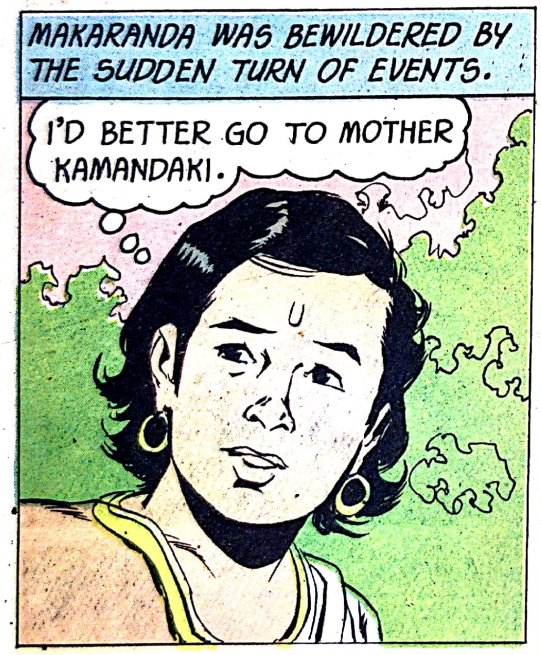
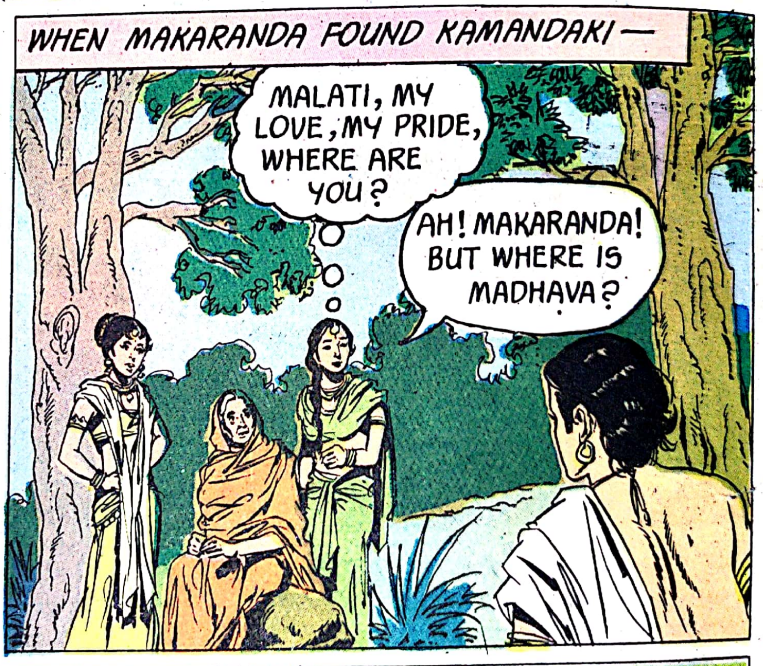
SHE CAME UPON THE UTTERLY DEJECTED MADHAVA AND MAKARANDA. INTRODUCING HERSELF, SHE EXPLAINED ALL.
BUT WHERE IS MALATI?
YOU SHALL SOON GO TO HER.


RIGHT IN FRONT OF MAKARANDA'S EYES, SAUDAMINI WHISKED MADHAVA AWAY AND VANISHED.


MAKARANDA WAS BEWILDERED BY THE SUDDEN TURN OF EVENTS.
I'D BETTER GO TO MOTHER KAMANDAKI.


WHEN MAKARANDA FOUND KAMANDAKI—
MALATI, MY LOVE, MY PRIDE, WHERE ARE YOU?
AH! MAKARANDA! BUT WHERE IS MADHAVA?

SUDDENLY—
SAUDAMINI! MY FIRST DISCIPLE... AFTER SO MANY YEARS! MALATI SAFE! MADHAVA!

AFTER SAUDAMINI HAD PAID OBEISANCE TO KAMANDAKI SHE BROUGHT OUT A ROYAL EPISTLE.

I HAD GONE TO SEE THE KING. ON BEHALF OF BHURIVASU AND NANDANA HE WELCOMES MADHAVA AS A SON-IN-LAW AND OFFERS MADAYANTIKA TO MAKARANDA.

AT LAST THE VOW TAKEN BY THE TWO FRIENDS WILL BE KEPT.

BU-BUT-I THOUGHT MY FATHER WAS AGAINST THE MATCH.

KAMANDAKI THEN EXPLAINED TO MALATI AND MADHAVA ABOUT .THE VOW TAKEN BY THEIR FATHERS.

WE NEEDED MUCH TACT TO ACCOMPLISH THIS WITH THE GOOD-WILL OF THE KING AND NANDANA.

THE HAPPY GROUP TURNED TOWARDS THE PALACE TO PAY THEIR RESPECTS TO THE KING, NANDANA AND BHURIVASU.



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